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Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/259, according to which the Assembly decided to proclaim 2016–2025 the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition, called upon the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to lead the implementation of the Decade and invited the Secretary-General to inform the Assembly about the implementation of the Decade, on the basis of biennial reports compiled by FAO and WHO.

The report provides an overview of the progress made in implementing the Decade, reflecting key developments at the international, regional and country levels. A work programme for the Decade was developed through an inclusive and collaborative process and efforts to implement the Decade have been actively pursued. Global nutrition targets have yet to be fully achieved but some progress has been made in implementing national commitments. Almost all countries have policies relating to nutrition, often covering all forms of malnutrition. However, nutrition is not always a stated objective in national sectoral policies or development plans. Intersectoral coordination mechanisms have been established to achieve coherent nutrition objectives and targets, often including multiple stakeholders. In general terms, however, implementation should be scaled up, investment in nutrition increased, policy coherence enhanced and the number of national commitments raised. The Decade offers a unique opportunity to accelerate progress on all those fronts.

To assess further progress in implementing the Decade, open and inclusive dialogues between all stakeholders should be arranged at mid-term and at the end of the Decade, in consultation with Member States.



I. Introduction

1. On 1 April 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/259¹ through which it proclaimed 2016–2025 the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (“Decade”), called upon FAO and WHO to lead the implementation of the Decade, and invited the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly about the Decade’s implementation on the basis of biennial reports jointly compiled by FAO and WHO.

2. The proclamation of the Decade was recommended at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in November 2014, co-hosted by FAO and WHO, which adopted the Rome Declaration on Nutrition (Rome Declaration)² including ten broad policy commitments and its companion Framework for Action (FfA),³ both of which were endorsed by the General Assembly while declaring the Decade in resolution 70/259.

3. In 2015, the FAO Conference and the World Health Assembly (WHA) also endorsed the ICN2 outcome documents and urged the Membership to implement the commitments set out in the Rome Declaration and the FfA 60 recommendations.

4. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders committed to set out a vision for a fairer, more inclusive, prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world in which no one is left behind. The General Assembly acknowledged the ICN2 commitments by including in the 2030 Agenda a specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG2), as well as embedding nutrition-related concerns in the other SDGs.

5. The world is off track to reach the global targets on nutrition. However, prioritized and accelerated action-oriented efforts within the Decade can lead the world to meeting the ICN2 commitments, the 2025 WHA six global nutrition targets,⁴ the global diet-related NCD targets,⁵ and the many additional nutrition-relevant targets in the 2030 Agenda.

6. In 2016, 815 million people were undernourished globally, up from 777 million in 2015, but lower than the 900 million estimated in 2000. Global stunting, wasting and overweight estimates in children under five were 22.9 per cent (155 million), 7.7 per cent (52 million) and 6.0 per cent (41 million), respectively. Exclusive breastfeeding reached 43 per cent and anaemia in women was 33 per cent. Forty-nine countries reduced stunting since 2012 and 36 reported increase in exclusive breastfeeding. Conversely, overweight in all population groups is increasing and anaemia is not decreasing. In 2016, 124 million children and adolescents aged 5–19 years were obese, and obesity affected 11 per cent of adult men and 15 per cent of adult women.

7. According to WHO estimates,⁶ one in 10 people are affected by foodborne diseases every year, with 33 million healthy life years lost and 420,000 deaths annually. Children under five are disproportionately affected and account for 40 per

¹ <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/70/259>.

² <http://www.fao.org/3/a-m1542c.pdf>

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm215c.pdf>.

⁴ <http://www.who.int/nutrition/global-target-2025/en/>.

⁵ <http://www.who.int/nmh/ncd-tools/definition-targets/en/>.

⁶ http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/foodborne-diseases/ferg/en/.

cent of the foodborne disease burden and almost a third of all deaths. The highest burden per population was observed in Africa and in South-east Asia.

8. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/259. Informed by inputs contributed by Members and various stakeholders, the report outlines progress made in implementing the Decade, reflecting key developments at international, regional and country levels.

II. Development of a Work Programme for the Decade

9. In resolution 70/259 proclaiming the Decade, the General Assembly mandated FAO and WHO to: (i) co-lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); (ii) develop a work programme for the Decade, using coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), in consultation with other international and regional organizations and platforms; and (iii) produce biennial reports for use by Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly about the Decade's implementation.

10. The aim of the Decade is to provide a clearly defined, time-bound cohesive framework that operates within existing structures and available resources to implement the ICN2 commitments and the nutrition-related SDGs. The added value of the Decade is to establish a focused period to set, track and achieve impact and outcomes, and provide an accessible, transparent and global mechanism for tracking progress and ensuring mutual accountability for the commitments made.

11. The Decade is intended to build on existing efforts, promote alignment among actors and actions, accelerate implementation of commitments, and foster additional commitments in line with the transformative ambitions of ICN2, the SDGs and the WHA targets. The Decade provides an enabling environment such that policies and programmes respect, protect and fulfil human rights obligations and gender requirements. The achievement of the SDGs will only be met when much greater political focus is given towards improving nutrition, as nutrition is both an input and outcome of sustainable development.

12. The Work Programme of the Decade was drawn up in keeping with the guidance given by the General Assembly in resolution 70/259, through an inclusive and collaborative process, which included four face-to-face discussions with Members and two open online consultations. The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) and the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) in relations with CFS actively participated in online consultations to help shape the Decade's Work Programme, with participants from 48 countries responding through 189 individual contributions.

13. The Decade's Work Programme⁷ embraces six cross-cutting and connected action areas derived from the FfA recommendations, namely:

- (a) Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets;
- (b) Aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions;
- (c) Social protection and nutrition education;
- (d) Trade and investment for improved nutrition;

⁷ Full text available at <http://www.un.org/nutrition>, <http://www.who.int/nutrition/decade-of-action/workprogramme-2016to2025/en/>, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bs726e.pdf>

- (e) Safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages;
- (f) Strengthened governance and accountability for nutrition.

14. The means of implementation of the Decade through its Work Programme include:

(a) The submission to FAO and WHO by Members and UN organisations of their ICN2 specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) commitments for action, in the context of national nutrition and nutrition-related policies, and in dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, tracked through an open access database;

(b) The convening of action networks, i.e. informal coalitions of countries aimed at advocating for the establishment of policies and legislation, allowing the exchange of practices, highlighting successes and providing mutual support to accelerate implementation;

(c) The convening of forums for planning, sharing knowledge, recognizing success, voicing challenges and promoting collaboration;

(d) The mobilization of financial resources to support implementation of national policies and programmes.

15. The commitment submission process will be continuous throughout the Decade. Tracking policy progress and country-specific commitments will be based on country self-assessments, facilitated through UN-led policy surveys, and ad hoc validation studies performed by the UN system and academia.

16. Accountability and shared learning are at the heart of the Decade. A dialogue on accountability, in line with key policy documents on aid effectiveness (Accra Agenda for Action, Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness) and the Framework for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, is being established, with all relevant initiatives and platforms aimed at soliciting commitments in nutrition and related fields.

17. Progress in achieving the global nutrition and diet-related NCD targets is to be measured throughout the Decade at national and global levels. Targeted programme and policy evaluations should be carried out, with support by the UN system to identify good practices.

18. Evidence-informed advocacy and communication is a key element of the Decade. A visual identity, available in all UN languages, was developed for use across the Decade. Governments and other stakeholders are encouraged to use the Decade's visual identity by submitting an authorization request to the joint FAO/WHO Secretariat.

19. Information on the Decade and its Work Programme is available on a dedicated website,⁸ which allows open access to the commitment repository and to other products and activities related to the Decade, such as brief flyers on the establishment of action networks, and country specific SMART commitments. Other communication materials developed include a resource guide on how to define SMART commitments, submit and report on them.

⁸ <http://www.un.org/nutrition>.

III. Global status of policies in the action areas of the Decade's work programme

20. The Second Global Nutrition Policy Review was conducted by WHO in 2016–2017 to assess and analyse the current status of countries' nutrition policies and programmes as well as their implementations. This review provides a baseline for measuring progress under the Decade.

21. Currently 183 countries have national policies that include nutrition goals and actions, of which 168 countries have specific plans on nutrition, 105 countries have health sector plans with nutrition components, and 48 countries have integrated nutrition objectives in their national development plans. Among the 60 United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks analysed, 50 per cent include the WHA global nutrition targets. Over 70 countries worldwide have made efforts in 2014 and 2015 to mainstream food security and nutrition in sectoral policies and investment programmes.⁹

22. Regarding human and institutional capacities, 149 countries have trained nutrition professionals and 109 countries provide training for health workers on maternal and child nutrition.¹⁰ Capacity building has been carried out on nutrition and food safety actions in relation to the implementation of the Decade.

23. More specifically, the following status has been observed in the six action areas of the Decade's Work Programme.¹¹

1. *Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets*

24. Prevention and mitigation of food insecurity risks have been implemented in 57 countries, while 28 countries have applied socio-economic measures that reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience of communities at risk of threats and crisis. An increasing number of countries are considering incorporating sustainability in their food-based dietary guidelines. Twenty-seven countries are implementing measures to reduce food loss and waste through awareness-raising campaigns, capacity building and evidence-based policies.

25. An alliance for transforming food systems to reduce overweight and obesity in the Latin America and Caribbean region was formed in 2017. Its aim is to analyse the role of current food systems in the emerging overweight situation in this region and to implement a public policy agenda that helps transforming food systems.

26. Policies to reduce the impact of marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children currently exist in 63 countries. About 30 countries use fiscal policies to encourage consumers to make healthier food choices, while 11 countries have improved various aspects of their national food control systems, including legislative and institutional frameworks, as well as technical and scientific capacities to design and implement risk-based food safety management programmes. Moreover, 66 countries have strengthened food safety emergency preparedness and response by engaging with the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network. In the framework of the International Health Regulations (IHR) implemented by WHO, food safety constitutes a pillar in the national capacity building and country indicators on food safety have been updated in its Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

⁹ <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global-nutrition-policy-review-2016.pdf>,
<http://www.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/>.

¹⁰ <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global-nutrition-policy-review-2016.pdf>.

¹¹ <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global-nutrition-policy-review-2016.pdf>,
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms430e.pdf>.

27. Product reformulation measures (mandatory or voluntary) are being implemented in countries. At least 36 countries¹² have reported that they are implementing measures to reduce and eliminate *trans*-fatty acids in food products either through reformulation or regulation to ban *trans*-fatty acids, and 63 countries¹³ have implemented policies to reduce salt intake through reformulation of food products.¹⁴ Moreover, 71 countries have fortified wheat, 106 countries fortified salt with iodine, and 41 countries fortified oils with vitamin A or iodine. The CFS intersessional event on *Impact assessment of policies to support healthy food environments and healthy diets* held in May 2017, highlighted how impact assessment tools provide decision-makers with analysis of the situation and the potential impact of policies on food environments and diets.

2. *Aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions*

28. The most common interventions delivered through primary health care are counselling on breastfeeding (159 countries) and complementary feeding (144 countries). Other main interventions delivered through health system are iron or iron-folic acid supplementation to pregnant or non-pregnant women of reproductive age (121 countries) and micronutrient supplementation to children under five years of age: vitamin A (76 countries), iron (41 countries), zinc (38 countries), multiple micronutrient powders (52 countries). Deworming programmes were also conducted in 69 countries. In addition, nutrition was integrated into programmes addressing HIV/AIDS in 81 countries and tuberculosis in 67 countries.

3. *Social protection and nutrition education*

29. Nutrition is addressed through social protection in 42 countries, and 38 countries implement conditional cash transfers.

30. Regarding nutrition education, 151 countries have counselling programmes on healthy diets and 148 countries have media campaigns; 153 countries have school health and nutrition programmes, including nutrition education in 94 countries; and 116 countries have developed food-based dietary guidelines. While 121 countries are implementing nutrition labelling, only 35 countries have front-of-pack labelling.¹⁵ Food safety is integrated in nutrition policies in 58 countries, promoting practices such as the *Five Keys to Safer Food*.

31. FAO's programme on rural poverty reduction employs contextualized strategies to support countries to strengthen social protection systems through policy advice, capacity development, information systems and evidence-based knowledge instruments for improving rural livelihoods and strengthening ability of the rural poor to manage risks.

4. *Trade and investment for improved nutrition*

32. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Tariff Download Facility¹⁶ which contains tariff information for some 150 countries, the vast majority of countries have been applying tariffs on imported food and beverage products. However, the applied tariff level varies significantly between countries and many of these may not have a nutrition objective. WTO also maintains the Information

¹² <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global-nutrition-policy-review-2016.pdf>,
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms430e.pdf>.

¹³ According to WHO Country Capacity Survey, as per NCD Progress Monitor 2017.

¹⁴ <http://who.int/ncds/management/best-buys/en/>.

¹⁵ <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global-nutrition-policy-review-2016.pdf>,
<http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/>.

¹⁶ <http://tariffdata.wto.org/Default.aspx?culture=en-US>.

Management System on Technical Barriers to Trade¹⁷ as well as the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Information Management System,¹⁸ which contain notifications on various domestic regulations with an impact on trade. About 100 notifications of new or changed nutrition-related regulations were notified during 2016 and 2017.

33. CFS and UNSCN jointly organized a CFS intersessional event in June 2016 on *Trade and Nutrition: Opportunities and Risks* to increase common understanding about healthy diets in the context of trade and value chains. Highlighting the opportunities and constraints in enhancing coherence between trade policy and nutrition action, the event provided insights from various perspectives and experiences that showed the relations between trade and nutrition.

34. At an intersessional event convened by CFS in May 2017 as a contribution to the implementation the Decade, the ICN2 commitments and the 2030 Agenda, five countries shared their approaches to investments in food systems for improved nutrition and human health by providing concrete examples of how different stakeholders have addressed healthier food systems through specific investments in different contexts.

35. The FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, whose standards are serving as international points of reference in WTO Agreements, continued to set new food safety and nutrition standards. It established in 2016 a Task force to combat antimicrobial resistance in the food chain.

5. *Safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages*

36. While 129 countries recommend exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, 100 countries continue to recommend breastfeeding until two years or beyond. However, only 12 per cent of births occur in facilities designated as "Baby-friendly". Whereas 135 countries have enacted legal measures covering some of the provisions of the International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes, only 39 countries incorporate all or most of its provisions. Maternity leave cash benefits of at least two thirds of prior earnings for 14 weeks are currently provided in 77 countries.

37. At present 56 countries include in their plans or policies actions to create healthy food environments in the workplace, 35 countries in hospitals and 153 countries in schools, but only 72 countries have clear standards for foods and beverages available in schools. Adolescent girl underweight and/or anaemia is being addressed only in 44 countries.

6. *Strengthened governance and accountability for nutrition*

38. To achieve coherence in relevant national strategies, policies, plans and programmes, and align national resources to achieve nutrition objectives and targets, intersectoral mechanisms are needed to oversee and monitor implementation and accountability. In 147 countries, one or more intersectoral coordination mechanisms, involving multiple stakeholders, are in place and chaired by Agriculture (in 25 countries), Health (in 103 countries) or the Prime Minister's or President's office (in 38 countries). Such mechanisms include the private sector in 61 countries, which emphasize the need for robust safeguards against conflicts of interest.

¹⁷ <http://tbtims.wto.org/>.

¹⁸ <http://spsims.wto.org/>.

IV. Actions triggered by the Decade

1. Commitments by governments

39. During the 70th WHA in May 2017, Brazil became the first country to make ambitious, concrete commitments as part of the Decade, with a focus on reversing the obesity trend. The Minister of Health announced three SMART commitments, supported by 41 policy measures, to be achieved by 2019. These were further expanded to 38 commitments at the CFS session in October 2017. Brazil committed to promote sustainable production of and access to nutritious and diverse food and to structuring family farming; promote and protect adequate and healthy eating, control and prevent adverse health conditions arising from poor nourishment (including reducing regular consumption of soft drinks and artificial fruit juices by at least 30 per cent in the adult population, increasing by at least 17.8 per cent the percentage of adults who regularly consume fruit and vegetables and stopping the growth of obesity in the adult population); promote universal access to adequate and nutritious food, prioritizing families and people facing food insecurity and malnutrition, traditional peoples and communities and other vulnerable social groups; scale up water availability and promote healthy diets in diverse environments and at all stages of life; consolidate food security and nutrition governance and support initiatives promoting sovereignty and the human right to adequate food at the international level.¹⁹ Brazil will implement these commitments by 2019.

40. The second country to make specific commitments to the Decade at the 70th WHA was Ecuador. The Vice-Minister of Health announced five commitments, supported by 15 policy measures, with the long-term aim of improving and safeguarding the health and well-being of all Ecuadorians. Ecuador committed to promote environments that promote people's health; promote breastfeeding; provide early comprehensive care to pregnant women, children under five, school age children, with emphasis on health education; promote community participation and intersectoral action.²⁰ Ecuador will implement these commitments by 2025.

41. In November 2017, at the Global Nutrition Summit held in Milan, Italy, USD 3.4 billion were pledged to tackle the global malnutrition crisis, including USD 640 million in new funding. Importantly, the commitments made included domestic funding by countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, India, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria and Zambia, among others.

2. Contributions by UN organizations

42. FAO has mainstreamed nutrition in its Strategic Framework, making nutrition a cross-cutting theme for the Organization, and bringing to the fore the need to focus on food systems as a sustainable way to address malnutrition in all its forms, in line with the Decade and ICN2. Connected to the Decade, ICN2 and SDG2, the FAO Strategy on Climate Change²¹ was adopted in July 2017 to guide FAO's action to achieve improved integration of food security and nutrition within the international agenda on climate change, ensuring that food security and nutrition are appropriately prioritized in international forums addressing climate change. FAO provided technical support to over 90 countries with focus on integration of food-based approaches in multi-sectoral nutrition strategies, and of nutrition in agriculture policies and investment plans, school food and nutrition and nutrition education. FAO and WHO are contributing to address the global dietary data gap through the development of the FAO/WHO Global Individual Food Consumption database. FAO

¹⁹ <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/commitments/1394>.

²⁰ <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/commitments/1421>.

²¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7175e.pdf>.

has reviewed the design of about 50 World Bank agriculture investment programmes in countries to evaluate how their commitment to integrate nutrition in their agricultural investments is progressing. The lessons learnt from this review have been integrated in e-learning modules on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems. FAO has also supported countries and regional economic communities in the formulation and implementation of 18 international trade agreements.²²

43. WHO has embedded the Decade and included several nutrition indicators in its draft 13th General Programme of Work 2019–2023, and it also has developed a new 2016–2025 nutrition strategy. In 2016–17 WHO developed evidence-informed guidance on healthy diet and effective nutrition interventions, and provided policy and programmatic guidance to nearly 90 countries with focus on successful nutrition policy formulation, guidance on essential nutrition actions, and technical support to measure and report nutrition indicators strengthening surveillance systems. Moreover, 14 countries were supported through workshops on childhood obesity. The WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity put forward six sets of recommendations to accelerate action to prevent obesity throughout the life course.²³ WHO also promoted the evidence-informed nutrition guidance and recommendations to be used in developing and updating nutrition and food labelling standards and guidelines in Codex to ensure Codex work will also take into consideration of increasing problems of the double-burden of malnutrition. Furthermore, WHO has promoted the use of international food safety standards through the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.²⁴

44. UNICEF has committed to support the Decade through the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The Strategic Plan reflects UNICEF's new ambition for Maternal and Child Nutrition in support to the 2030 Agenda. UNICEF programmes will be implemented in over 120 countries and will respond to different needs and contexts through five programme areas encompassing 20 context-specific results that will support the action areas of the Decade.²⁵ In the past 2 years, UNICEF worked to improve the nutrition situation of children, adolescents and women in 127 countries, provided technical and programmatic support to ensure infant feeding counselling services to women in their communities (109 countries), supported legislation to fortify staple cereals with iron and other essential micronutrients (86 countries), and responded to humanitarian situations (78 countries). Over 250 million children aged 6–59 months received two doses of vitamin A, over 35 million adolescents were benefitting from programmes to prevent anaemia and other forms of malnutrition, 10 million children were benefitting from home fortification programmes, and over 3 million children with severe acute malnutrition were admitted for treatment annually. UNICEF released the first ever global report on the quality of complementary foods and feeding for children under two in LMICs, produced over 100 publications in peer review journals, and collected programme coverage data from 110 countries.

45. Investments in nutrition are guided by WFP's new Nutrition Policy (2017–2021), which outlines WFP's global work to support national commitments to achieve SDG targets for ending all forms of malnutrition — including both undernutrition (wasting, stunting, and micronutrient deficiencies) and overweight. While support for nutrition in emergencies remains central to WFP's work, the policy also puts forth an

²² FAO's contribution to the Nutrition Decade: <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/FAO-s-contribution-to-the-Decade.pdf>.

²³ <http://www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/publications/echo-report/en/>.

²⁴ WHO's contribution to the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025): <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/WHO-contribution-to-the-Nutrition-Decade-final.pdf>.

²⁵ UNICEF Commits to the Nutrition Decade: <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNICEF-commits-to-the-Nutrition-Decade.pdf>.

integrated approach to nutrition by simultaneously considering issues of availability, access, demand and consumption of nutritious foods to achieve the goal of adequate and healthy diets for vulnerable groups of all ages. Throughout the Decade, WFP is committed to working with WHO, UNICEF, FAO, and IFAD and other UN agencies to leverage all available synergies to contribute to collective nutrition results, not only in least-developed countries but universally throughout the world.²⁶ WFP reaches more than 70 million vulnerable and food-insecure people each year, supporting the development and delivery of national plans and policies to end malnutrition in all its forms.

46. The Strategic Framework 2016–2025 of IFAD articulates its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and is connected to the Decade. As a specialized UN agency and an international financial institution focused on the needs of smallholder farmers and poor rural people, IFAD seeks to improve nutrition by combining solid technical knowledge with the provision of the finance that governments need to make lasting and effective investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and rural development. Considering IFAD's comparative advantage, significant contributions to the Decade will be made to sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets (action area 1) and to trade and investment for improved nutrition (action area 4).²⁷ Nutrition is an essential component of IFAD's corporate commitments as articulated in its nutrition action plan (2016–2018). Half (50 per cent) of the projects approved by IFAD as of 2018 are nutrition-sensitive and all (100 per cent) Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes provide a section on nutrition which guides in-country nutrition mainstreaming.

47. The commitments made to the Decade by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are in line with its core functions of coordination, information management, advocacy, policy and humanitarian funding. More specifically, this includes scaling up global advocacy and campaign efforts in critical situations of acute malnutrition and famine; facilitating access and contributing to enhanced protection; mobilizing resources for improved nutrition in humanitarian contexts; promoting preparedness partnerships and initiatives, and strengthening humanitarian leadership around nutrition as a collective outcome at the country level.²⁸

48. UNSCN is doing its part to support the UN “delivering as one” by helping to maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition; supporting consistent and accountable delivery by the UN system; exploring new and emerging nutrition-related issues; and promoting knowledge sharing across the UN system. For the Decade to achieve longstanding results, forward thinking and adaptively to the constantly evolving nutrition landscape is essential. UNSCN is working to push the research community to come forward and fill these knowledge gaps. UNSCN also builds bridges between the intergovernmental decision-making forums of its members, as part of its effort to engage in all relevant forums to ensure that nutrition is mainstreamed. The UNSCN paper *Global Governance for Nutrition and the role of UNSCN* provides a detailed overview of the actors involved in the nutrition landscape. The *Guidance Note on Integration of Nutrition in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework* serves to better equip UN Country Teams to integrate nutrition into their planning and programming, and to reflect nutrition-related risks and opportunities in the Common Country Analysis. The flagship publication entitled *A*

²⁶ WFP and the Nutrition Decade. <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/WFP-and-the-Decade-of-Action-on-Nutrition-Final.pdf>

²⁷ IFAD and the Nutrition Decade. <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/IFAD-and-the-Decade-of-Action-on-Nutrition.pdf>

²⁸ OCHA's Commitment Summary. <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/DECADE-COMMITMENTS.pdf>

*Spotlight on the Nutrition Decade as UNSCN News 42*²⁹ illustrates in a series of papers how the Decade provides a window of opportunity to drive integrated action across multiple sectors and to enhance coordination amongst all actors for improved nutrition.

49. The UN Inter-agency Task Force on Noncommunicable Diseases (UNIATF) started in 2016 a thematic working group on nutrition, coordinated by UNSCN. The group focuses on improving policy coherence, specifically related to the food environment, a space in which consumers make their dietary choices and is heavily influenced by a large range of actors and factors (trade, labelling, prices, processing etc.). The group also intends to integrate nutrition considerations in other areas of work of the Task Force (e.g. environment, physical activity). Ending childhood obesity through action in the school environment is an early focus for the group, which will also provide input to the 3rd High-level Meeting on NCDs in 2018.

3. *Contributions by non-state actors*

50. The dynamic involvement of civil society and private sector representatives, especially through the CSM and PSM, has added value to the consultations conducted around the Decade, and their various contributions have been captured in the UNSCN publication *A Spotlight on the Nutrition Decade*.

51. In addition, individual members from the CSM and PSM have started to make their SMART commitments official. Since these commitments are in support of government priorities on nutrition, they are also encouraging their country teams to use their commitments as engagement tools to persuade national governments to make theirs. For example, a platform of public interest civil society organizations and social movements that have actively engaged in the ICN2 process and continue to advance its follow-up has also submitted a collective position “Manifesto” to highlight the principles on which the Decade should evolve, their expectations and how they will be engaged.³⁰ The World Obesity Federation has prioritized addressing marketing of foods to children that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt, making cities healthier and providing treatment for obesity.

4. *Multistakeholder initiatives*

52. The membership of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement currently comprises 60 countries, and three Indian States. A new SUN Strategy was developed for 2016–2020, with a vision of “a world free from all forms of malnutrition” by 2030, which is aligned to the WHA six global nutrition targets and two diet-related NCD targets. The Strategy focuses on supporting SUN member countries to sustain an enabling political environment, prioritise and implement effective nutrition actions aligned with a common set of results. From 7 to 9 November 2017, the SUN Global Gathering was organized for the first time in a SUN country: Côte d’Ivoire. About 900 participants from all 60 SUN countries and the different networks reviewed progress in tackling malnutrition and shared innovations and good practices.

53. Networks of stakeholders supporting the SUN Movement are broadening. The UN Network for SUN (UNN) increases UN coherence, coordination and convergence in support of national nutrition efforts, builds capacity for multi-sectoral nutrition governance and programmes and supports the functioning of multi-stakeholder coordination platforms. In 2016, the UNN had over 700 staff dedicated to nutrition

²⁹ <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSCN-News42-2017.pdf>

³⁰ Civil Society “Manifesto” on Decade of Action on Nutrition. <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/EN-Civil-Society-Manifesto-on-DoA-on-Nutrition-Advanced-Draft.pdf>

across all SUN countries, the majority being national staff. The UNN supports all action areas of the Decade, including SMART target setting.

54. The Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme of the 10-Year Framework for Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) is a multi-stakeholder initiative to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable food systems. Work is on-going to integrate nutrition and NCDs in 10YFP SFS project proposals, making the link between sustainable production and sustainable and healthy consumption.

5. Action networks

55. Norway announced, at the Ocean Conference in June 2017, the establishment of a *Global Action Network on Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition*,³¹ under the umbrella of the Decade and as a direct follow-up to the SDGs. The Norwegian Government invited interested countries to join this Action Network by giving higher priority to fisheries and aquaculture to improve global food security and nutrition, considering the ocean's potential to supply a substantial part of the world's future need for food.

56. Two additional regional networks were announced at the Global Conference on NCDs held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in October 2017: the *Action Network for the Americas on Healthy Food Environments*, led by Chile, and the *Action Network for Ending Childhood Obesity in the Pacific*, hosted by Fiji. The focus of work of these networks includes advancing and sharing experiences in: the fiscal interventions on sugar-sweetened beverages, front-of-pack labelling, restriction on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children, and provision and promotion of healthy diets in schools and other settings where children gather. Both these networks have held preliminary working group meetings to identify priority activities for the next two years and define network membership and governance. The Conference endorsed the *Montevideo Roadmap 2018-2030 on NCDs as a Sustainable Development Priority*,³² pledging in particular to developing guidelines and recommendations that support and encourage healthy and sustainable diets.

57. In 2016 the *Food Networks' Alliance* was set up under the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). Adopted in 2015 and signed by over 160 cities worldwide, the MUFPP is a joint commitment by cities that aims to develop sustainable food systems at the city level that provide nutritious, diverse and affordable food to all people, thereby contributing to achieving the ICN2 commitments, the SDG health and nutrition targets and the aims of the Decade. The Alliance seeks to foster collaboration among national, regional and international city networks and serves as a hub for information sharing among. Examples of such networks include: the *Food Systems Network* of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group; *EUROCITIES*, the network of major European cities; and *Healthy Cities*, Italy's network of WHO cities.

58. As called for by the SAMOA Pathway,³³ FAO, together with UNDESA and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has led the development of the *Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS (GAP)*,³⁴ which was launched at the FAO Conference in July 2017. Making explicit references to ICN2, SDG2 and the Decade, the GAP is a guidance document intended to promote coordinated interventions of governments, private sector, civil society, international

³¹ <https://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/foodfromtheocean/action-network/>.

³² <http://www.who.int/conferences/global-ncd-conference/Roadmap.pdf?ua=1>.

³³ <http://www.undocs.org/A/CONF.233/10>.

³⁴ www.fao.org/3/a-i7297e.pdf.

organizations and other development partners to accelerate action to halt and reverse the growing food security and nutrition crises in a comprehensive manner.

V. Promotion and advocacy on the action areas of the Decade's Work Programme

59. Queen Letizia of Spain and King Letsie III of Lesotho were nominated as UN *Special Ambassadors for Nutrition* to raise awareness of malnutrition challenges and build support for improved nutrition stemming from ICN2 and the Decade. Other efforts aimed at tackling malnutrition in the context of the Decade include forums and conferences, reports and publications, resolutions and recommendations.

1. Forums and conferences

60. In October 2016, CFS decided to scale up its role in advancing nutrition. To this end, it endorsed a framework to step up its contribution to the global fight against malnutrition in all its forms, serving as an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder global forum on nutrition, in line with its mandate.³⁵

61. In October 2017, CFS reaffirmed its decision to expand its nutrition work, providing a platform for global coordination and policy coherence and convergence on nutrition, in accordance with the Decade's Work Programme, and mandated its Open-ended Working Group on Nutrition to develop voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition in 2019,³⁶ based on the 2017 report on *Nutrition and Food Systems*,³⁷ produced by the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE). This report requested CFS to consider elaborating voluntary guidelines on improved food environments for healthy diets.

62. In December 2016, FAO and WHO co-hosted in Rome the *International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition*. Its focus was on supply-side and demand-side policies and measures for increasing access to healthy diets, empowering consumers to choose healthy diets and measures to strengthen accountability, resilience and equity within the food system. The Symposium fostered collaboration between governments and other stakeholders in developing innovative solutions to enable food systems to deliver healthy diets for better nutrition and health. During the final session, the draft Work Programme of the Decade was discussed, and expressions of SMART commitments and new ways of working together to seize the opportunity presented by the Decade were made by country delegates and other key stakeholders.

63. Intended to provide a vision for regional contexts and realities, five regional symposia³⁸ took stock of their dimensions and challenges of sustainable food systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition; shared key features of food systems in the respective regions, and how these influence dietary patterns; identified regional policy processes and experiences for tackling nutrition through a food systems

³⁵ CFS Engagement in Advancing Nutrition, CFS 2016/43/9.

³⁶ CFS 2017/44.

³⁷ HLPE, *Nutrition and Food Systems*, Rome, 2017–
www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-12_EN.pdf

³⁸ For Latin America and the Caribbean (San Salvador, 5–7 September 2017), for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 10–11 November 2017), for Africa (Abidjan, 16–17 November 2017), for Europe and Central Asia (Budapest, 4–5 December 2017) and for the Near East and North Africa (Muscat, 11–12 December 2017).

approach; and triggered the development of policy actions in line with the ICN2 FfA and the Decade's Work Programme.

64. The *Latin America Regional Meeting for Tackling Child Obesity — Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition*, convened by Brazil and hosted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in March 2017, encouraged countries of the region to engage in active coordination for the Decade's implementation, with particular focus on childhood obesity. Participating countries presented their ideas to develop SMART commitments, building on their national plans, and discussed potential mechanisms for cooperation, such as country-led action networks.

65. In preparation for the 2017 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), FAO, IFAD and WFP organized an expert group meeting on progress in achieving SDG2 in June 2017 in New York. The meeting reaffirmed that a crucial change necessary to reach SDG2 is to transform food systems through a holistic approach, from production to consumption, so that they are more sustainable, inclusive and resilient to climate change, and support the production, access and consumption of safe and nutritious food. SMART policy and financial commitments made under the umbrella of the Decade will be key to the achievement of SDG2.

66. In July 2017, the FAO Conference adopted a resolution to transmit, together with WHO, a proposal to the UN General Assembly to declare 7 June each year as World Food Safety Day.

67. At its 2017 session, the HLPF resulted in a ministerial declaration on *Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges*,³⁹ underlying that poverty remains a principal cause of hunger, emphasizing that investment in health contributes to the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and committing to "ending poverty and hunger and ensuring healthy lives at all ages everywhere". A *Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums* was presented at the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the HLPF.⁴⁰ These reports serve the Decade by highlighting that malnutrition has overtaken hunger in terms of the numbers of people affected worldwide, that it is linked closely to inequality and the sustainability of food systems, and that complex political, economic, social and environmental factors are involved in combating it. Mainstreaming nutrition into all agricultural development policies and strategies is therefore needed, and addressing health system weaknesses is of the utmost importance.

68. The *Sub-regional meeting for tackling obesity in middle income countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) Region — Towards more commitment for the Decade of Action on Nutrition* that took place in Amman, Jordan, in September 2017, brought together seven countries from the region to discuss and plan their priority actions for reducing child obesity as well as SMART commitments in the context of the Decade.

69. The WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, in October 2017, agreed to develop a regional action plan, in close consultation with its Member States, on protecting children from the harmful impact of food marketing, guided by relevant WHA resolutions, including on ICN2 and the Decade⁴¹.

³⁹ E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2.

⁴⁰ E/HLPF/2016/5 and E/HLPF/2017/3.

⁴¹ http://www.wpro.who.int/about/regional_committee/68/resolutions/wpr_rc68_r3_protecting_children_from_theharmful_impact_of_food_marketing.pdf.

70. On 4 November 2017, in connection with the G7 Health Ministers' Meeting, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO, FAO and other partners co-organized in Milan, Italy, the Global Nutrition Summit, building on past events under the *Nutrition for Growth* initiative. The Summit took stock of nutrition commitments made to date and announced additional commitments to accelerate the global response to end malnutrition in all its forms. The G7 Health Ministers' communiqué recognized the new policy and financial commitments made by the Milan Global Nutrition Summit and advocated for food systems to support healthy and sustainable diets in the context of the Decade.

71. In June 2017, at the Stockholm Food Forum convened by the EAT Foundation, over 500 leaders from science, politics, business and civil society exchanged ideas on how to shift food systems towards sustainability, health, security and equity within the boundaries of our planet. In October 2017, the EAT Foundation also hosted its first Asia-Pacific regional meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia. At both events, plenary sessions focused on and profiled the Decade.

2. Reports

72. The Decade's objectives and merits have been highlighted in several reports and publications, some of which are outlined below.

73. *Panorama of Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America and the Caribbean 2016*,⁴² jointly published by FAO and PAHO as an ICN2 follow-up activity linked to the Decade, reported that obesity affects 23 per cent of the region's population and that around 58 per cent of its inhabitants are overweight, and called for coordinated policies and actions to address obesity in the region. The ensuing edition, *Panorama of Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017*,⁴³ found that undernourishment in the region increased by 6 per cent of the population, or 2.4 million people, which would not allow the region to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030 if this trend continues.

74. Coinciding with the start of the Decade, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2017*,⁴⁴ published by FAO, provided an in-depth analysis and found that 14.3 million people were still experiencing severe food insecurity in terms of access to food in the region. Malnutrition — undernutrition, overweight and micronutrient deficiencies — was also present to varying degrees in all countries of the region, with 172 million adults being obese, women being at greater risk of malnutrition than men, and high rates of child undernutrition and obesity.

75. In 2016 the *Global Nutrition Report*⁴⁵ underlined the relevance of ICN2 commitments and recommendations especially in giving prominence to the issue of food systems. The 2017 edition of the *Global Nutrition Report*,⁴⁶ noting that action on nutrition is needed to achieve the SDGs and that action throughout the SDGs is needed to address the causes of malnutrition, called for building connections across the SDG system to ensure that the Decade becomes one of "transformative impact" through SMART nutrition commitments. The NCD Progress Monitor reports in 2017 on 10 national progress indicators including unhealthy diet reduction measures to promote accountability.

⁴² <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6977e.pdf>.

⁴³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7914e.pdf>.

⁴⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i8194e.pdf>.

⁴⁵ <http://eibrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/130354/file/130565.pdf>.

⁴⁶ https://www.globalnutritionreport.org/files/2017/11/Report_2017.pdf.

76. The 2017 edition of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*⁴⁷ marks a new era in monitoring progress made towards achieving a world without hunger and malnutrition, within the framework of the SDGs and the Decade. The report will henceforth monitor progress towards the targets of ending both hunger and all forms of malnutrition, with enhanced metrics for quantifying and assessing hunger and malnutrition, including two indicators on food insecurity and six indicators on nutrition.

77. Two reports of the Secretary-General on *Agriculture development, food security and nutrition*, submitted to the General Assembly in 2016⁴⁸ and 2017,⁴⁹ formulated a set of recommendations on optimizing the role of agriculture in ensuring food security and improving nutrition in connection with SDG2 and the Decade.

78. In August 2016, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition formulated *recommendations to improve nutrition through agriculture and food systems*,⁵⁰ which explicitly refer to ICN2 and the Decade.

3. Recommendations and resolutions

79. In May 2017, the 70th WHA welcomed resolution 70/259 and requested the Director-General of WHO to work with the Director-General of FAO to support its Member States, in developing, strengthening and implementing their policies, programmes and plans to address the multiple challenges of malnutrition, and to convene meetings to share best practices, including consideration of SMART commitments within the framework of the Decade.⁵¹ The 70th WHA also approved the updated Appendix 3 of the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2020 that provides guidance on the most cost-effective interventions to address unhealthy diets. Furthermore, an implementation plan on ending childhood obesity was approved.

80. In July 2017 the FAO Conference welcomed the proclamation of the Decade and encouraged FAO to further support its Members in fully achieving the global nutrition targets. It also acknowledged the development of the Decade's Work Programme.

81. Recommendations with a view to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to adequate food and nutrition were put forward by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in her reports transmitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in 2016⁵² and 2017.⁵³ In this context, the Special Rapporteur underlined that the Decade "presents a unique opportunity to ensure a coherent, inclusive and transparent response to malnutrition, embedded within human rights".

82. In connection with the Decade, the General Assembly adopted resolutions linked to nutrition in 2016 and 2017: (i) two resolutions encouraged Members and stakeholders to give due consideration to agriculture development, food security and nutrition while implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the SDGs and ICN2 commitments;⁵⁴ and (ii) two resolutions reaffirmed the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, while recognizing in this regard the importance of the global nutrition targets and the nutrition-related

⁴⁷ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-17695e.pdf>.

⁴⁸ A/71/283.

⁴⁹ A/72/303.

⁵⁰ <http://glopan.org/sites/default/files/ForesightReport.pdf>.

⁵¹ WHA69.8 — http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_R8-en.pdf.

⁵² A/71/282.

⁵³ A/72/188.

⁵⁴ A/RES/71/245 and A/RES/72/173.

SDGs.⁵⁵ Resolution 72/238, in particular, acknowledged the efforts made by Members and UN agencies that have already announced their commitments to the Decade, and encouraged all relevant stakeholders to actively support the Decade's implementation, including by making commitments and establishing action networks.

VI. Conclusion and way forward

83. Efforts to implement the Decade have been actively pursued. To this effect, a Work Programme for the Decade was developed through an inclusive and collaborative process. While global nutrition targets are yet to be fully achieved, some progress has been made in the implementation of national commitments. Almost all countries have policies related to nutrition, often covering all forms of malnutrition. However, nutrition is not always a stated objective in national sectoral policies or development plans. Intersectoral coordination mechanisms have been established to achieve coherent nutrition objectives and targets, often including multiple stakeholders. In general terms, implementation has to be scaled up, investments for nutrition need to be increased, enhanced policy coherence is required, and, most importantly, a greater number of SMART commitments is called for.

84. Countries may consider engaging in policy measures in which experience has been built but implementation is not yet at scale, particularly in regard to: the action area of food systems, the elimination of trans fatty acids from food products; the action area of health systems, the increased coverage of treatment for severe acute malnutrition, the quality of care in health facilities for the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding; the action area of social protection, the adaptation of social support systems to facilitate access to healthy diets; the action area of trade and investment, the targeting of public investments, infrastructure development and agricultural subsidies, to improve diet quality; the action area of supportive environments for nutrition, the provision of nutritious food in all public institutions; the action area of governance, the engagement of senior country leadership to guarantee an adequate level of commitment.

85. Given the successful experience of the Global Nutrition Summit in Milan in 2017, as part of the Nutrition for Growth initiative, WHO and FAO will work with the Japanese government for a new convening in 2020.

86. The Decade provides the opportunity to invite more actors, beyond the traditional nutrition actors, to engage in nutrition. Notable contributions can be made by city networks in particular. However, adequate forms and opportunities for the private sector have not yet been identified.

87. Additional connections need to be sought with communities acting on women's and children's health, human rights, water and those dealing with climate change. Synergies will be established with the International Decade of Action "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018–2028 and the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028 (A/RES/72/239). Further synergies will be established with the 3rd High-level Meeting on NCDs in 2018 and with the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in 2019. Such broadened scope of partnerships call for innovative, effective and nimble forms of governance, still avoiding new structures.

88. At country level, intersectoral coordination mechanisms have been established to achieve coherent nutrition objectives and targets, often including multiple stakeholders. Still, good models of collaboration with all stakeholders and adequate rules of engagement need to be worked out and promoted.

⁵⁵ A/RES/71/191 and A/RES/72/238.

89. The Decade and ICN2 call for increasing investments: donor funding for nutrition is primarily focused on undernutrition. The World Bank estimates that current yearly spending on nutrition-specific interventions to address stunting, severe acute malnutrition, exclusive breastfeeding, and women's anaemia is USD 2.9 billion from government sources and USD 1 billion from donors. To fully achieve the WHA targets, an additional USD 7 billion per year should be spent in the next 10 years. All governments need to consider their specific investments to address different forms of malnutrition and the impact of their investments in different sectors on nutrition.

90. An analysis of the quality and ambition of commitments made by Members, the UN system and other stakeholders is needed, including of the processes for their development, implementation and reporting, and for holding to account different actors. Greater clarity on accountability mechanisms is needed, as well as synergies with existing mechanisms for SDGs reporting.

91. As foreseen in the Decade's Work Programme, open and inclusive dialogues among all stakeholders to evaluate further progress in implementing the Decade need to be convened at mid-term (2020–21) and at the end (2025) of the Decade. Members will be consulted as to the format and modalities of these reviews.